

POLICY

ELECTRICAL SERVICE PERMITS

Approved: *Timothy Wegner*

[Timothy Wegner \(Feb 16, 2022 09:17 PST\)](#)

Revised: *Timothy Wegner*

[Timothy Wegner \(Feb 17, 2022 12:14 PST\)](#)

Purpose

On occasion the counter team and building inspection staff are requested to review and issue permits for new electrical services not associated with a new residence or commercial building. Sometimes service requests are for purposes that create unsafe conditions, violate zoning or building code standards, or are for unknown reasons creating conditions where staff are unable to approve a permit. This policy is to clarify when new electric services are permitted.

Analysis:

Over the last couple years, the County has been experiencing an increase in the number of new or upgraded electrical service requests. In some cases, these requests have been on property vacant of any structures and may or may not have a water well. From a land use requirement, a property must have an approved primary use in order for Building Services to issue permits. Typically, that approved primary use is established through the permitting and construction of a residential or commercial building. However, there are times when the primary use of a property may be an agricultural operation without a residence present on the property. Often in these cases it is more difficult to establish a verified approved use if the agricultural activities are proposed and not already established. This requires Building Services to work closely with the Planning Division and the Agricultural Commissioner to determine the validity of the proposed use. Which, effects our ability to issue permits for accessory structures, such as, barns and electric service, when no actual primary use has been established on the property. In an effort to guide staff in making these decisions, the following scenarios/examples, should be used to determine when a new or upgraded electric service request can be granted.

Policy

Electric Service for Residential Properties

- Electric services shall not be allowed on vacant property.
- Temporary power may be granted for construction of primary residences and subdivisions. Temporary power shall not be allowed until the associated residential building permit has been issued; temporary power may be issued for subdivisions if the site improvement plan permit for the development has been issued. *The temporary power permit must be issued as a separate permit.* Temporary power shall not be connected to a structure and shall be established on an Electric Company approved temporary panel board with outlets to aid in the construction of the structure(s). Feeders from the electric service panel to other outlets within a subdivision may be allowed.
- Permanent electric services may be issued for each residence and may be included as part of the new home building permit. Permanent electric services shall not be released for connection to power until after the foundation has been poured and walls or integral supports have been installed to properly support the electric service in its permanent location (early power). Early power requests for construction must have a minimum of one temporary 20-amp outlet on a GFCI breaker/outlet for power to be released. Note, an attached residential accessory structure (second unit) or existing detached accessory structures converted to a second residence does not require, but may obtain, a separate electric service.

POLICY

ELECTRICAL SERVICE PERMITS

- Permanent service may also be established on a utility district/power company's approved service mount, separate from the residence. The meter shall not be released until the foundation has been poured and the, conduit, feeder, and subpanel have been installed and it meets the requirements for early power as noted above.
- Residences may obtain up to a 225-amp service without justification. Larger electric service requests shall be reviewed by a building inspector to determine acceptable justification (e.g. the home has multiple AC units, pool and spa equipment, multiple accessory structures with power, etc.).
- Additional electric services may be allowed on a case by case basis. For example, agricultural operations. Confirmation from the Agricultural Commissioner may be required for verification of agricultural operations.

Electric Service Commercial Properties

- Electric services shall not be allowed on vacant property.
- Temporary power may be granted for construction of commercial properties, including multi-family residences. Temporary power shall not be allowed until the associated building permit or site improvement plan permit has been issued. The temporary power permit must be issued as a separate permit. Temporary power shall not be connected to the structure and shall be established on a utility district/electric company approved temporary panel board with electrical outlets to aid in the construction of the structure(s). Feeders from the electric service panel to other outlets within a subdivision may be allowed.

Multiple suites

- Multi-family residences are allowed to have separate meters for each unit.
- Hotel/motel buildings are not allowed to have multiple meters. Except where justification is shown for the need of additional services for separate uses within the hotel/motel building (e.g. leased retail or restaurant spaces).
- Multi-building commercial complexes may have separate meters at each building and may have separate meters for each tenant space.

NOTE: Multiple meters serving one building shall be co-located at the building or as otherwise approved by the utility district/electric company and the Building Services Division.

Electric Service Agricultural Properties

- Electric services shall not be allowed on vacant property.
- Electric services for Agricultural water wells, are permitted to obtain a 100-amp electric service. The permit for the water well shall be issued prior to the issuance of the electrical service permit. Electric service shall not be released for connection until the well has been drilled and rough electrical installed. Larger electric services may be approved on a case by case basis, provided adequate justification is provided (obtain approval from the Supervising Building Inspector). In cases where larger services are requested, to establish an agricultural use, approval from the Agricultural Commissioner is required to verify the need for such a service to establish the proposed agricultural operation.

Note: All services shall be sized for the proposed use. This is also consistent with PG&E, SMUD, and Liberty Electric policy. For projects not covered in this policy, seek guidance from the Supervising Building Inspector.






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